



**Association for Behavioral
Health and Wellness**

*Advancing benefits and services
in mental health, substance use
and behavior change.*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 15, 2018

Contact: Pamela Greenberg

Phone: 202.449.7660

Email: greenberg@abhw.org

ABHW Responds to Ways and Means Committee RFI on Opioid Epidemic Solutions

Washington, DC (March 15, 2018) – The Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness (ABHW), the national voice for payers that manage behavioral health insurance benefits for over 175 million people, responded to a request for information by the House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Kevin Brady (R-TX) and Ranking Member Richard Neal (D-MA), along with Health Subcommittee Chairman Peter Roskam (R-IL) and Ranking Member Levin (D-MI) on ways to prevent and treat opioid abuse and dependence in the Medicare program.

As part of the Committee's ongoing work to develop legislation that protects Americans from this growing epidemic, the Committee is seeking comments from a multitude of stakeholders including behavioral health payers and managed care providers.

ABHW recommendations included:

- Managed behavioral health insurers face barriers in coordinating Medicare beneficiaries' care because of 42 CFR Part 2 (Part 2). Obtaining multiple consents from the patient is challenging and obstructs whole-person, integrated approaches to care. ABHW supports the harmonization of Part 2 with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) for health care treatment, payment, and operations to increase care coordination and integration among treating providers and other entities in communities across the nation.
- Health plans should have access to prescription drug monitoring program (PDMP) data so they can have a more complete picture of the use of controlled substances in the community. If allowed access, these entities could identify patients at risk of overdose or complications and become a strategic partner in preventing and identifying misuse.
- Medicare does not currently reimburse for a continuum of behavioral health services. In particular, Medicare does not cover methadone as a treatment for opioid use disorder (OUD), residential treatment, intensive outpatient programs, and case management. Coverage of these additional services would expand access to OUD treatment and improve the care beneficiaries receive.

Read ABHW full comments [here](#).

###

[ABHW](#) is the leading health plan association working to improve access and quality of care for mental health and substance use disorders. ABHW's members include national and regional health plans who care for more than 175 million people. Together we work to reduce stigma and advance federal policy on mental health and addiction care. Member companies - Aetna Behavioral Health, Anthem, Beacon Health Options, Centene Corporation, Cigna, New Directions Behavioral Health, Optum, and PerformCare.